

only colony I have found so far was at Woodchester Park, near Nymphsfield, Gloucestershire in 1965. However, Mr. R.S. Cropper informed Dr. D. R. Ragge in November, 1979 that he knew of seven sites from North Somerset (Vice-county 6), but had not been able to re-find it in two of them, one of which was on boggy heathland in the Peat Moors. He considered that the latter site, being such an untypical one, may have been the result of a deliberate introduction. However, such calcicolous species as the Silver-spotted Skipper butterfly *Hesperia comma*, L. have been taken in these peat moors, so the presence of *lineatus* there may be quite natural.

Woodland Grasshopper *Omocestus rufipes* (Zett.)

The only Somerset haunt of this rare and local grasshopper (although often common where it occurs) so far as I know is Great Breach Wood, near Street, at the eastern end of the Polden Hills (Vice-county 6), where I discovered it in considerable abundance on 17th August, 1971 in almost all the clearings I examined and also along the grassy margins of some of the woodlands rides. On my next visit to this locality on 6th August, 1974, however, I failed to find any at all. The glades and rides where it had flourished only three years previously were almost completely overgrown and the habitat had thus become unsuitable. I did not have time enough to visit all other parts of Great Breach Wood, so it may well survive elsewhere or perhaps in other woods in the district such as Butleigh Wood. Unfortunately, I have not been able to visit these woods at the right season since 1974. Much of Great Breach Wood is nowadays a reserve of the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation and it is to be hoped therefore that the Trust will take steps to locate and protect any surviving colonies of this nationally rare and attractive grasshopper.

There is an old record of the Woodland Grasshopper from Batheaston, near Bath (Blathwayt, 1906), but as this species has often been confused in the past with the very similar Common Green Grasshopper *Omocestus viridulus*, in the absence of any details, I believe this report should be treated with caution, although *rufipes* may well occur in the woods around Bath. An adult male in his striking black and red livery, and white palps is, however, quite unmistakable.

Incidentally, on the Continent *rufipes* is by no means confined to woodland glades and edges, being common on roadside verges, canal banks and in open country generally. Its specialized habitat in England is no doubt connected with the fact that it is on the north-western limit of its range here.

(To be continued)

THE EARLY GREY: XYLOCAMPA AREOLA ESPER IN FEBRUARY 1981. — Following a very mild January, a specimen of this moth appeared here at a lighted window on the 18th of February. — H. N. MICHAELIS, 5, Glan y Mor, Glan Conway, Denbighshire.